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NEWS RELEASE

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The Erma Bombeck historical marker will be dedicated on Friday, June 20, at 1 p.m. along the path from parking lot B to St. Mary's Hall.)

ERMA BOMBECK RETURNS TO CAMPUS, BICENTENNIAL HISTORICAL MARKER TO BE DEDICATED ON JUNE 20

DAYTON, Ohio — Erma Bombeck's smiling face will soon be back on the University of Dayton campus thanks to a new historical marker from the Ohio Bicentennial Commission and Ohio Historical Society.

The marker, located outside St. Mary's Hall, is part of a program to highlight significant Ohio people and places for the state's 200th birthday. It will be dedicated at 1 p.m. on Friday, June 20, as part of Reunion Weekend festivities at the University of Dayton. Bombeck, a 1949 alumna, is one of UD's most famous graduates. The historical marker program began in 1953 for the Ohio's sesquicentennial. The program has been given new life and emphasis leading up to Ohio's bicentennial. The Bombeck marker includes a photo of Erma Bombeck, career highlights and a quote from Phil Donahue.

Bombeck credited the University of Dayton with launching her writing career. Her syndicated column, "At Wit's End," appeared in more than 900 newspapers. She wrote 12 books, nine of which made *The New York Times'* Bestsellers List. Bombeck also appeared regularly on ABC's "Good Morning America" for 11 years. She was still writing her column for Universal Press Syndicate and developing a new book for HarperCollins Publishers when she died from complications of a kidney transplant on April 22, 1996.

"Were Erma to be present at the Ohio Historical Society marker ceremony, I'm certain she

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would have recalled her most significant brush with things historical at UD," said Bill Bombeck, Erma's widower and a 1950 UD graduate. "She was proud to have passed Dr. (Wilfred) Steiner's baffling new course, 'The History of Russia.' Since I was a history major, she constantly challenged me with all kinds of peccadilloes about some Ivan or another. To me they were all Terrible!"

Other people in the media being recognized with historical markers include poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, humorist James Thurber, cartoonist Milton Caniff and the Warner Brothers (Jack, Sam, Harry and Albert). Markers in the Dayton area will be installed at Antioch College, the Dayton Engineers' Club, Huffman Prairie, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and in Xenia for author Helen Hooven Santmyer.

Erma Bombeck served on the University's board of trustees from 1984 to 1987. She co-chaired with her husband, Bill, the National Alumni Challenge Campaign during the University's capital campaign in the 1980s. She spoke at events on campus, including a writers' workshop, and participated in advertising and direct-mail campaigns to help broaden the University's image and recruit students.

Today, the University of Dayton National Alumni Association sponsors the bi-annual Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop, drawing hundreds of aspiring and professional humor and human interest writers from across the country. UD created the Erma Bombeck Online Museum (www.ErmaMuseum.org) and adds exhibit items each year on Erma's birthday. The University also co-sponsors an annual writing competition with the Washington-Centerville Public Library. The Bombeck Family Learning Center, an early childhood education demonstration school on campus, is named after the Bombeck family.

Because of the historical marker's location, Erma will continue to help recruit students for the University. Campus tours of prospective students will walk past the marker. Student tour guides plan to point out the University's famous graduate to high school students considering the University of Dayton. What might Erma tell them?

"Seize the moment! Remember all those women on the Titanic who waved off the dessert cart."